

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# Changes in purchasing patterns in the beauty market due to Post-COVID-19: Literature review

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**Abstract**

**Background:** With online purchases' skyrocketing due to COVID-19, there has been a big change in the beauty products consumers' purchase.

**Aims:** The purpose of this paper was to review the literature focusing on changes in purchasing patterns in the beauty market after COVID-19 pandemic.

**Methods:** This review paper is a literature review, and the method is a narrative review.

**Results:** The past and present purchasing of beauty products were rapidly changed. The cosmetics and many beauty products were increased purchasing rate due to marketing of Wanghong broadcasting. Also, the non-face-to-face market environment has expanded after COVID-19.

**Conclusion:** As COVID-19 pandemic changes consumer values and lifestyle, its role and function are changing and its purchasing patterns are altered.

**KEYWORDS**

COVID-19, beauty market, online shopping, purchasing patterns

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Cosmetics and skin care products have played various and important roles in human history. Colored cosmetics were used to prepare for combat, heightened the excitement of courtship, and adorned the dead before the funeral. Skin care products affect everything from religious practices to the health of the general public.<sup>1</sup> A brief look at the history of these products is important to understand the many advances made in current use and manufacturing processes.<sup>2,3</sup> Cosmetics have developed and grown with human origins in ancient times as a means of sorcery, symbols of wealth in the middle ages, expressions of cleanliness and beauty in modern times, and changes in consumer values and lifestyles.<sup>4</sup> In order to respond differently to customers' needs, a wide variety of cosmetics distribution channels are emerging, including department stores, door-to-door sales, one-brand shops, home shopping, hospitals and skin care centers, and marts.<sup>5</sup> This change in the distribution channels of cosmetics is affecting consumer behavior,<sup>6</sup> the marketing strategies of distribution channels are being activated day by day,<sup>7</sup> and consumer satisfaction is affecting the growth and sales of distribution channels. The recent outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic has changed the lives of

people, businesses and consumers, and it has been noted that cosmetic products such as purchased makeup are increasing purchases of certain cosmetics during COVID-19.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, this study examined the correlation between changes in the purchasing patterns in the beauty market post-COVID-19 and the changes in the lifestyle of purchasing patterns from COVID-19. In this light, there is a need for the development of a non-contact delivery culture until COVID-19 completely subsides. Furthermore, it is now becoming essential to expand the e-commerce sector through online advertising in the beauty markets as a supplier during this era. It is also a time of consumers requiring a system that enables them to choose a variety of customized cosmetics suitable for each individual using the online beauty markets. This study is expected to be used as a marketing reference which depicts the changes in the beauty industry and online purchasing behaviors post-COVID-19 (Tables 1-3).

## 2 | METHODS

This study is a literature review, and a narrative review approach has been used for this study. A total of 300-400 references were

TABLE 1 The past and present purchasing of beauty products

NO	Journal name	Author	Year	Discussion	References
1	Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology	Emilia Scieszko, Emilian Budny, Helena Rotsztein, Anna Erkiert-Polguj	2021	How has the pandemic lockdown changed our daily facial skin care habits?	9
2	Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology	Patrycja Mościcka, Natalia Chróst, Robert Terlikowski, Mateusz Przylipiak, Katarzyna Wofosik, Andrzej Przylipiak	2020	Hygienic and cosmetic care habits in polish women during COVID-19 pandemic	11
3	Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology	Cyril Messaraa, Nicola Robertson, Melissa Walsh, Sarah Hurley, Leah Doyle, Anna Mansfield, Lorna Daly, Claire Tansey, Alain Mavon	2020	Clinical evidences of benefits from an advanced skin care routine in comparison with a simple routine	12
4	Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology	Ran Pang, Zhiru Wei, Wenhui Liu, Zong Chen, Xu Cheng, Han Zhang, Guangshuai Li, Limbo Liu	2020	Influence of the pandemic dissemination of COVID-19 on facial rejuvenation: A survey of Twitter	14
5	IntJ Environment Res Public Health	Moon J, Choe Y, Song H.	2021	Determinants of consumers' online/offline shopping behaviors during the COVID-19 Pandemic	18

TABLE 2 Increased purchasing rate due to marketing of Wanghong Broadcasting

NO	Journal name	Author	Year	Discussion	References
1	Journal of Interactive Advertising	Chen Lou, Shupeai Yuan	2019	Influencer marketing: how message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media	19
2	Public Relations Review	Clare Davies, Mitchell Hobbs	2020	Irresistible possibilities: Examining the uses and consequences of social media influencers for contemporary public relations	22
3	Journal of Society of cosmetic scientists of Korea	Fu, OIXINGZI, Park MJ	2019	The Effect of the Chinese Wanghong's Marketing on Consumers' Responses	27
4	Journal of Business Research	Michael T. Lee, Carol Theokary	2020	The superstar social media influencer: exploiting linguistic style and emotional contagion over content?	23
5	Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics	Zhao, Li & Lee, Stacy & Reiter Copeland, Lauren	2019	Social media and Chinese consumers' environmentally sustainable apparel purchase intentions	28

TABLE 3 Expansion of non-face-to-face markets COVID-19

NO	Journal name	Author	Year	Discussion	References
1	Journal of Media Business Studies	Sophia Gaessle, Oliver Budzinski	2020	Stars in social media: new light through old windows?	36
2	Heliyon	Dwidienawati D, Tjahjana D, Abdinagoro SB, Gandasari D, Munawaroh	2020	Customer review or influencer endorsement: which one influences purchase intention more?	37
3	Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology	Lee J, Kwon KH	2021	Recognition and the development potential of mobile shopping of customized cosmetic on uncontact COVID-19 period: focused on 40s to 60s women in Seoul, Republic of Korea	38
4	Konkuk University Graduate School of Industry	Oh JE	2020	A study on the recognition of direct-to-consumer genetic testing and intention to purchase customized cosmetics	39
5	Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology	Elder A, Ring C, Heitmilller K, Gabriel Z, Saedi N	2021	The role of artificial intelligence in cosmetic dermatology—current, upcoming, and future trends	41

selected using representative journal search websites such as PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus, and RISS, of which a total of 43 papers were selected in the final stage based on the recent of the last three years (2019–2021).

### 3 | RESULTS

#### 3.1 | The past and present purchasing of beauty products

The COVID-19 fandum explored our lives in many ways, leading to complete closure. Many lifestyles such as skin care had to change my habits. Many women had no choice but to take care of their skin. During the closure, women often followed the entire home skin care procedure, had a positive effect on the skin after implementing skin care changes, and became significant as a source of knowledge in the cosmetics sector as well as a thriving market for cosmetics.<sup>9</sup> Before the start of COVID-19, most of the respondents removed their makeup, applied cream every day, and applied color makeup freely. Since COVID-19, people have shown great interest in skin care and are looking for the Internet. There are more activities on the Internet to acquire and purchase knowledge about cosmetics that suit you. During the epidemic, most people found information about skincare on the Internet. There has been a growing interest in information and guidelines on skin care that can be found on the Internet and obtained from professionals, or hairdressers.<sup>9,10</sup> Sanitary management began when mask use was essential to the COVID-19 crisis. In particular, the use of clean products has increased. The amount and purchase rate of hand sanitizer, shower body gel, and hair conditioner were high. On the contrary, basic and color products such as eye cream, face cream, skin, face serum, face mask, face scrub, body lotion, body scrub, hand cream, foot cream, nail condition, nail varnish, lipstick, eyebrow pencil, blusher, etc., were significantly reduced compared with cleaning products.<sup>11</sup> People performed advanced skin care protected by the external environment and wanted healthier and cleaner skin care.<sup>12</sup> Functional cosmetics for aging prevention and health were also sought.<sup>13</sup> Also, they wanted to make their faces younger and more beautiful because of COVID-19.<sup>14</sup> After COVID-19, people said they would avoid tinted makeup, buy a lot of basic cosmetics while using masks, and not buy makeup-related products.<sup>15</sup> Consumers wanted clean and healthy skin over time, so they preferred products that helped them cleanly.<sup>16</sup> Even after COVID-19, consumers said they would wear masks, and most said that only basic makeup can be done while wearing masks.<sup>17</sup> In the presence of severe external influences including serious prevalence of infectious diseases such as SARS or COVID-19, the consumption patterns of consumers have been changing or expanding into the paradigm of online shopping channels than making offline purchases.<sup>18</sup> Table 1 summarizes beauty purchasing activities that have changed from offline to online due to COVID-19.

### 3.2 | Increased purchasing rate due to marketing of Wanghong Broadcasting

Spending on influencer marketing has increased exponentially over the past few years. A mechanism has been formed for influencer marketing to affect consumers through social media.<sup>19</sup> Social media has become a mainstream celebrity and a popular influence in the world by creating a platform that can be accessed by anyone with a shared perspective to a large audience.<sup>20</sup> As influential media figures in the COVID-19 crisis became influencers, it had a significant impact on consumer behavior changes.<sup>21</sup> The proliferation of social media technologies has led to celebrity promotion being directly linked to sales and increased product promotion and sales rates more than the average celebrity.<sup>22</sup> Superstar social media influencer's concentrated audience traditionally recognizes that peripheral elements of verbal style and emotional contagion are key to increasing sales needs,<sup>23</sup> which is to develop into attachment mechanisms to outperform celebrities rather than product usability.<sup>24</sup> On the contrary, Wang Hong is a form of explosive sales in the Chinese market by ordinary people who are highly recognized and popular on SNS. They introduce their strengths and weaknesses through various media outlets and communicate them to consumers. It is not just the appearance of celebrities, but rather the utilization and necessity of actual objects and the frankness of their stories.<sup>25</sup> Consumers can follow Wang Hong in the field of interest on the platform to collect information, relieve stress through his beautiful image, and make Wang Hong friendly to communicate.<sup>26</sup> Recently, marketing using "Wang Hong" has been actively carried out in China. The term Wang Hong has emerged as an important buzzword as a new industry group characterized by the Internet ecosystem called Wang Hong Marketing. The Wanghong market is known to be worth about 18 trillion won (100 billion yuan), and it has emerged as a new marketing channel with a strong influence in the fashion and beauty sector in China, with the establishment of the Wanghong Economic Research Institute recently. The popularity of Wang Hong, who is not an entertainer but has become a star on the Internet, is also very explosive in the Chinese market. Therefore, Korean companies that have recently entered China are also recognizing and utilizing the importance of marketing using Wang Hong, which has high recognition and influence on Chinese social networking services (SNS).<sup>27</sup> "Wang Hong" refers to an Internet star who is active online and social networking sites and influences many people, "Wang" meaning "Internet" and "Hong" meaning "popularity." It is a combination of these words. Wang Hong refers to a celebrity, an Internet star who has a lot of fans and influence on Chinese online social media, and is a newly coined term for the Chinese version of the power blog concept. Wang Hong is not an entertainer, but he has outstanding beauty or unique talent to attract public attention and has a strong marketing power that stimulates followers' consumption with his content. They are actively communicating with their fans on online, developing and uploading their own personalities and various contents, and captivating people with their unique looks that reflect various styles and tastes.<sup>28</sup> Table 2 summarizes the related data on

the increase in the purchase rate as marketing through an influencer named Wang Hong in China is active. COVID-19 has caused a drastic impact on the global economy. The implementation and expansion of mobile shopping have effectively promoted people's consumer confidence, and shopping behavior is no longer limited by time and space.<sup>29</sup> "SNS" refers to platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. Influencers are trusted more than celebrities, and consumers recognize influencers as ordinary people who are not much different from themselves. This creates a strong sense of familiarity which exerts a strong influence on specific target groups. The influencers' high level of interest and knowledge in beauty have made them the main focus of marketing in the cosmetic markets and have induced a tremendous change in the current cosmetic marketing industry. From the perspective of the cosmetic companies, it is common to choose influencers as the advertising models instead of celebrities, and the influencers participate in the production process and directly engage in selling the products which increases the sales.<sup>30</sup>

### 3.3 | Expansion of non-face-to-face markets COVID-19

The pandemic has shut down the entire world. In addition to restricting people's movement, the world health organization and the government have stipulated maintaining an interpersonal distance of 1.5 or 2 m (about 6 feet) from each other to minimize the risk of transmission through droplets we commonly use.<sup>31</sup> We also need to study the non-face-to-face marketability of humans in maintaining the benefits of sociality despite being social distancing.<sup>32</sup> Now consumers are adjusting to their new daily lives. This means that the timespent at home has been longer. Video calls are booming as people practice social distancing. The longer you spend at home, the more consumers think about their daily routines, such as remote work, online education, home training, home cooking, how their children play, and how they spend time with their families.<sup>33</sup> As soon as the social distancing economy began, the difference between offline and online stores was evident. Retailer's online sales, which have both online and offline stores, increased 133% as of January 2020.<sup>34</sup> Through the interaction of social media, web shopping established strong relationships with various product purchasing activities of social media followers, revealing that marketing potential appeals to companies and brands.<sup>35</sup> In social media (influencers, microcelebrities), the application of stars to new phenomena is another pattern of purchasing activity and has become a social issue.<sup>36</sup> As digital and social media continue to grow in terms of usage and advertising costs, the advertising industry is transforming into an innovative strategy. One strategy is influencer marketing, a purchasing pattern that links online personas to brands or services that potential customers trust and regularly participate in. Influencer marketing experiences and perceptions of people working for advertising agencies have a decisive impact on product purchases and are turning into an effective consumption pattern culture.<sup>37</sup> In addition, with the rapid transition

into a non-contact society due to COVID-19, cosmetics purchasing patterns are also changing. The proportion of non-contact mobile shopping for personalized cosmetics is on the rise, and the mobile shopping for cosmetics will intensify even further in the future.<sup>38</sup> DTC genetic testing refers to 'direct-to-consumer genetic testing', which enables consumers to directly receive genetic tests without visiting medical institutions such as hospital. In the Korean Society, beauty cosmetics tailored to the individual skin are being developed through DTC genetic testing. The environment of the traditional cosmetic market consisted of manufacturers who sold products to mass consumers. Such environment is now changing into an era of customized cosmetics for consumers.<sup>39</sup> As the demands of consumers for a variety of products increased, the level of satisfaction for the finished products have decreased in the consumers. In order to cater for the diverse needs of consumers, companies are introducing marketing methods to manage the consumers on a one-to-one basis. The development of internet activated the communication between manufacturers and consumers, which increased the possibility to produce customized cosmetics tailored to the needs of consumers.<sup>40</sup> The prolonged non-contact phenomenon has made consumers the masters of personalized skin care, application of augmented reality, and skin analysis for beauty care at home. The number of individuals using augmented reality applications and skin analysis tools at home is continuing to grow, and such individuals will become experts in beauty care.<sup>41</sup> Table 3 summarizes related data that is developing as the non-face-to-face beauty market is rapidly changing due to COVID-19. According to a recent report, the use of smartphones has increased exponentially during the global COVID-19 pandemic. People are heavily occupied with browsing the internet, using social media, watching TV shows, playing games, chatting with friends and family, and shopping online. In particular, the increased use of smartphones has increased people's exposure to blue light. Different wavelengths and duration of exposure to blue light can cause oxidative damage to skin cells.<sup>42</sup> As a countermeasure against such exposure, blue light prevention cosmetics have been developed to block the blue light and prevent skin aging. Different to general cosmetics, blue light prevention cosmetic can have sufficient effect of blocking blue light as a cosmetic used in the basic stage of skin care, and the interest and demand for blue light prevention products are expected to increase further in the future.<sup>43</sup>

## 4 | CONCLUSIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic started driving cities into lockdowns. Prior to the pandemic, consumers purchased products through behaviors such as observing, touching, and smelling products offline. Following the pandemic, the influx of consumers into various social media has changed the patterns of their purchasing behaviors by referring to reviews and sample products under the impact of the influencers. The influencers' activities of selling products have had a significant impact on the purchases made by the consumers and increased the sales of beauty products. The pandemic propelled online activities to

be more prevalent than offline activities, which produced the desires for various products in the consumers. In order to respond to the diverse needs by lowering the customer satisfaction with standardized products, companies have begun to introduce marketing methods which provide one-on-one customer care. With the increase in Internet shopping due to COVID-19, the degree of communication between manufactures and consumers has become more active. This increased the possibility of producing customized cosmetics to meet the needs of the consumers. The non-contact online beauty cosmetics in the Korean society have been advancing through the personalization of cosmetics. The traditional cosmetics markets were comprised of an environment in which manufacturers sold the products to multiple unspecified consumers. However, the markets are now changing into a consumer-oriented environment. This reflects the changing roles and functions of the beauty market due to the diversification of the market caused by the lockdown of cities.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors of this manuscript do not declare conflicts of interest.

## ETHICAL STATEMENT

The conducted literature review did not require the agreement of the agreement of the bioethics committee.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing not applicable—no new data generated.

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